

1. How would you attempt to convince someone who had not studied philosophy that there is something important at stake in the dispute between the subjectivist and objectivist accounts of moral judgment?

Before we can go to the point of judging whether an action is a right or wrong thing to do, we may need to find the real structure or mechanism of this important process (moral judgment). What is the boundary of this work? Is it too wide in scope or beyond our ability to successfully approach this job? Maybe it is all up to us or maybe it is too far and too difficult and we will never succeed in finding and understanding what it is or how it works. Or maybe we can just flow on the natural instinctive ocean and never able to control it?

It is very important to differentiate or find the area of location for moral judgment, which is usually considered to involve the two main areas of subjectivity and objectivity. To try to find the most likely which area of this moral judgment work should stay. It can help to clear our discovery path and make it more bright and easy to drive through.

Do we feel guilty and not steal things from a supermarket because we can imagine ourselves in jail? Is it because we can clearly see the consequence of an action that we do not choose to do the wrong thing? If so, moral judgment may be an objective thing that we can manage. But wait a minute, since we have very clear laws in society, then why do we still need police and jails? We still see a bunch of criminal cases on the news every night. Perhaps objective moral judgment may involve knowledge that can be taught or transferred to others? Socrates would say, "it's absolute and it's objectively right or wrong. People who can't see it's right or wrong because they didn't have enough knowledge. No one does the wrong thing knowingly."

Like Kant says, I will do the right thing just because I can imagine that I want others to do the same thing. Or I will not do the wrong thing just because I don't want other people to do that to me. Can it be that objective? I'm not going to kill anyone because I imagine myself facing the same fate as the victim? I can see how it feels to pray for my life from a murderer. But if in some exception where I could kill the victim and have a magic power to be absolutely sure that I will never be in the same situation as this victim, would that make me feel free to be a murderer? If that is true, we can move a bit closer to the objectivist area of moral judgment.

In a subjectivist perspective, everybody has their own internal judgment. What is wrong for you may be not wrong for me. It's not wrong if I don't feel guilty about it. If I come from a religious culture that sees marriage is very important and divorce is a very serious, prohibited action, then I will judge it as wrong when I see a couple who has divorced just because they disagree and want to separate. In this case, it doesn't matter what other people will say, I, myself, can see it differently. It depends on my feeling of what is right or wrong. This sounds unreliable for a moral judgment system, but it's pretty realistic. Actually relativists will agree with this idea. Like Protagoras says "Man is a measure of all things. It depends". This rhetoric is still actively in use in today's world. Politicians exercise rhetoric method, especially in the election season. When we listen to or watch a political speech during a television campaign, it can be a very sound and convincing speech. We may see the rightness of it. So it is not objectively or absolutely right or wrong. It depends, or it is subjective.

Solipsism will say, what we think is right is already right for us. If I decide to not go to work today, I will tell myself "I always work hard for the company. It's already fair. My absence today will help the team to learn something new. It will benefit the company". I will judge it as the right thing to do because I benefit from it.

If we want to solve a problem, we surely have to find the root of it. If we want to fix undesired actions or to boost a desired behavior from people, we have to find this core decision-center first (moral judgment area), just like we try to track the command center of a big criminal organization, the place where every crime act is plotted and decided upon. The place that every order has lunch. At least we may have a chance to take it down if we know where it is located.